

**Q: What are the benefits of electronic voting machines?**

A: There are many benefits in California for using electronic voting machines, however we have selected the top 8 benefits for you.

The top 8 benefits are:

1. All electronic voting machines used in California elections are equipped with voter verified paper audit trails (VVPAT) to ensure the integrity of every vote cast.
2. Electronic voting machines allow voters with disabilities for the first time, to cast their ballots privately and independently.
3. The easy to use machines result in fewer voter errors compared to other voting systems.
4. They can easily accommodate multiple languages, a federal requirement.
5. They make voting simpler and allow voters to catch errors such as inadvertently voting for too few (under voting) or too many (over voting) candidates in a single race.
6. Electronic voting reduces the costs and environmental effects of elections by reducing the need for expensive paper ballots.
7. Their use assists California in complying with the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requirements.
8. They can easily accommodate multiple ballot types for use in various kinds of elections (i.e. primary, general, special, etc.).

**Q: How does a voting system get certified in California?**

A: In order to be certified in California, electronic voting systems must first be reviewed and certified at the federal level. Once the system receives federal qualification, all voting systems applying for certification in California go through a 10 step state testing process. This process historically takes 50 to 55 days to complete, assuming that all goes well and no problems arise during the process.

These 10 steps are:

1. The Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment (OVSTA) reviews the application for its completeness and request modifications if necessary. Once reviewed, a test plan and schedule is developed.
2. OVSTA Makes logistical arrangements and preparation for certification testing.
3. State certification testing commences • *Note: State certification testing does not begin until the federal qualification testing is successfully completed.*
4. Upon completion of the State certification test, three items are scheduled: A volume test of the system, a demonstration of the system for election officials and the Voting System Technology Assessment Advisory Board (VSTAAB), and a public hearing is held.
5. The Secretary of State Office publishes a 30-day notice for public hearing.
6. The Secretary of State OVSTA team conducts a Volume test, conducts a demonstration for elections officials as well as VSTAAB, drafts and finalizes a staff report and the consultant writes and submits a report.

7. Publish staff report, independent consultant report and other material regarding system in advance of public hearing.
8. Conduct public hearing.
9. Close public comment period.
10. Final review of system and decision by Secretary of State.

**Q: Some claim that electronic voting systems are inherently insecure and vulnerable to fraud?**

A: The Secretary of State only certifies voting systems that are proven to be secure and reliable. Various types of electronic voting equipment have been used for over 20 years, yet not a single documented case of equipment –related fraud has been proven to have occurred anywhere in the U.S.

In California, all electronic voting must first complete rigorous federal testing which includes a software and security review. Once federal testing is completed, the State tests and evaluates the system for many factors including the security of the system in conjunction with the security measures required by the system's use procedures.

**Q: What is being done to prevent exploitation of potential security problems in the upcoming general election?**

A: In California, all electronic voting must first complete rigorous federal testing which include a software, hardware, firmware and a security review. Once federal testing is completed, the State tests and evaluates the system for many factors including the security of the system in conjunction with the security measures required by the system's use procedures. Additionally all voting terminals and hardware components are always under the physical control of election officials, who follow strict protocols to assure the equipment is secured against undetectable access. Furthermore every system is secured with tamper proof seals which contain a unique serial number that is logged prior to being sent out to the polling place to ensure no one has tampered with any part of the system.

**Q: Several notable computer scientists who work in election security have characterized the security issues as dangerous; however, the Secretary of State has said there is a "low probability" that the security vulnerability could be exploited. Why does the Secretary of State's opinion differ from that of the computer scientists?**

A: The policies and procedures put into place by our office along with security codes and measures that are needed, makes it almost impossible to hack California certified systems. Additionally, there are many external requirements such as serialized tamper proof seals, zero balance reports and paper trail logs that can not be altered. These security measures provide

additional checks and balances to secure the integrity of every vote prior to anyone successfully tampering with a device. The tests performed by computer scientists have not been performed in a true election environment with these security procedures in place.

**Q: Potential security issues have been identified in the Secretary of State's own security review. Why are these systems still being used in elections?**

A: Every certified system that had a potential security issue was only certified if the risk could be either significantly minimized by implementing additional security requirements or entirely eliminated by the strict policies and procedures placed by the Secretary of State's office. Every issue was resolved with security measure in place such as: serialized tamper proof seals, custody logs, paper audit trails, security codes and zero balance reports to name a few. Only the systems that could be proven secure and reliable were certified for use in California.

**Q: How will the Secretary of State ensure that security procedures are followed at the local level?**

A: All counties are required to send staff and poll workers to training prior to each election which includes training on the strict procedures that were approved in the certification process of each system. Additionally, the Secretary of State does Parallel Monitoring and Educational Monitoring to monitor and observe polling places in each county on Election Day and to ensure that the proper security measures and use procedures are in place.

**Q: What precautions are being taken to ensure voting machines are physically secure before, during and after the election?**

A: Every County is required to have policies and procedures in place to secure machines before, during and after each election. Prior to each election, all voting equipment is tested and inspected at the Federal, State and local levels. Serialized tamper proof seals are placed in various areas of the machines prior to its release to the designated polling place.  
All machines are property of the county and it is their duty and responsibility to securely store, and maintain these machines between elections.

**Q: How will counties ensure that procedures are followed by poll workers?**

A: Beyond the training that poll workers receive prior to an election, a chain of custody log is maintained for each machine. In addition, all counties have precinct boards with members that designate a polling place inspector for every polling place who are sworn in. It is the polling place inspectors' responsibility to ensure that all policies and procedures according to the election code and voting system requirements are followed.

**Q:What roles can the public play in addressing these security concerns?**

A: The public is encouraged to verify their paper audit trails at polling places. Further, Section 14433 of the Elections Code states that the counting of the ballots and statement of results is open to public inspection.

**Q:What additional steps is the Secretary of State taking to verify the vote count?**

A: The Secretary of State has implemented various programs that help's protect voters rights including the verification the vote count. One such program is Parallel Monitoring where SOS staff performs a test on Election Day in the same county and using same equipment along with same trend voting selection to ensure that the equipment gives expected results. Another is Election Day Observation of every county with random selection of precincts where SOS staff observes to ensure that policies and procedures are being followed. Finally we encourage public education and involvement of the election process.

**Q:Could political preferences of the manufacturer influence election results?**

A: California has taken extreme measures to implement checks and balances to ensure that the integrity of the data is preserved. During the certification process, the software is examined by SOS and a third party to ensure that the programs do exactly what they are meant to do. Additionally the paper audit trail is to capture voters intent and is used for balancing against tally reports.